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SUBJECT: SPEAKING OUT ON GITMO AND DETAINEES

REF: STATE 14238

11. (C) Embassy Madrid plans to deploy reftel points on GITMO and detainees as appropriate in several sets of outreach programs led by the Ambassador which we are planning for the coming months. This will be addition to our on-going engagement on the subject with the Spanish press and political elite, which is limited during the slow summer period when most/all Spanish leaders are out of town. Two of our planned outreach programs, which will include a series of events tied to each subject, center on Muslim outreach/religious tolerance and promoting a more favorable image of the United States in Spain. Both will offer opportunities to deal with GITMO and related issues. We would welcome a DVC with Ambassador Prosper (we have had at least two successful DVCs with him on this issue) or other appropriate senior department officials as part of our efforts.

12. (C) Spanish opposition to US policies regarding GITMO and detainees is widespread, and is shared across the political spectrum, including by the previous staunchly pro-American government. We will need to tailor our efforts appropriately to avoid provoking counterproductive coverage of the issue. Our aim in deploying our message will be to mitigate misconceptions about US activities in the war on terrorism, underline the need for new approaches in dealing with the terrorist threat, and promote a more educated view of the challenges to traditional laws of war that global terrorism poses to democratic societies.

AGUIRRE